

and perverse as soon as another enters on the scene. A child may be happy and obedient with either the mother or the father, but disagreeable when both are there. He may contentedly obey the nurse when she has him alone, and be difficult when the mother comes into the nursery. He may be good with either mother or nurse separately, and contrary with the two together. It seems indeed a universal tendency of little children to become more difficult when two or more grown-ups are present than when with one alone.

A young child does not of course mind more than one adult being present *provided* they all centre their interest upon *him*. There is indeed nothing that a child under five or six enjoys more than having a group of adults pliant to his will, doing what he suggests and admiring what he says and does. And tiny children very commonly are given this delight from time to time, when, for instance, a group of admiring aunts and visitors gather round him at bath-time. It is always the adults who take of this situation, never the child. The occasions when he has this pleasure of being the centre of attention, however, are normally few and far between. And the trouble for the child begins when the grown-ups withdraw their interest from him, begin to talk or smile or laugh with each other, do things together or appear in any way to shut him out from their love and regard. (Priscilla's suspicion of Mrs. L and Miss B. when they shared some joke together shows how ready a child may be to fear that the grown-ups are joined together to laugh at her.) The commonest circumstance for troublesome behaviour arising from this jealousy is of course provided by the family meal-table. I have a great many records of special contrariness and defiance in small children at the general meal-table.

When a little child begins to whine and be contrary the very

moment a second adult appears on the scene,
although up to
that moment he has been happy and docile with
one, this is
usually because he already knows very well that
they will not
subdue themselves to his wishes or direct
their interest
entirely to him. They are more likely to talk
about him,
or to unite in deciding what he is to do. At any
rate he feels
uneasy when both are present, and has recourse
to querulous-
ness and contrariness.

What the child very often tries to do in these
circumstances
is to *part* the grown-ups, to create
dissension and strife